

In re Patent Application of:
DE LAENDER ET AL.
Serial No. 10/660,067
Filing Date: September 11, 2003

In the Claims:

Claims 1-63 (Cancelled).

64. (Currently Amended) A pallet comprising:
at least one top support member adapted to support cargo;
at least one bottom support member;
a plurality of solid support blocks for separating the at least one top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween;
each solid support block comprising a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having upper and lower support member fastening surfaces exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining respective upper and lower support member a fastener area areas; and
a plurality of fasteners for fastening the at least one top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the respective upper and lower support member fastener areas.

65. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support

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blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

66. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 65, wherein the first, second and third rows are positioned substantially parallel to each other ~~and are aligned so that the support blocks guide the lifting member into a lifting position under the at least one top support member.~~

67. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 65, further comprising three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports, and wherein the at least one top support member is configured as a plate coupled to a top surface of the three cross supports.

68. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

69. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polyethylene has a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter.

70. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polyethylene is selected from the group

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consisting of a linear low density polyethylene, an ultra low density polyethylene, a low density polyethylene, a high density polyethylene, and an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.

71. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 68, wherein the polypropylene is formed from the group consisting of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter.

72. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

73. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellular material has particles sizes between about 0.1 mm and about 1 mm.

Claim 74 (Cancelled).

75. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

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Claim 76 (Cancelled).

77. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein at least one of the plurality of solid support blocks comprises first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis.

78. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 77, wherein the at least one solid support block further comprises third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis.

79. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks have a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of an oval, a teardrop, an egg shape, an elongated hexagon, a diamond shape and a kite shape, defining a longitudinal axis of the solid support block.

80. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the at least one cellular material includes particle sizes between about 0.05 mm and about 4 mm.

81. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

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82. (Currently Amended) A pallet comprising:
a plurality of top support member members comprising a plurality of spaced apart cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, and a plate coupled to an upper surface of said plurality of spaced apart cross members adapted to support cargo;

a plurality of at least one bottom support members member;

a plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks for separating the plurality of cross supports top and the at least one bottom support member members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween;

each solid support block comprising a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having upper and lower support member fastening surfaces exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining respective upper and lower a fastener area areas; and

a plurality of nails for fastening the top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the respective upper and lower fastener areas.

83. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row

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across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

84. (Currently Amended) The pallet according to claim 83, wherein said the plurality of ~~top support members~~ comprises cross supports comprise at least three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, and wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports.

85. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

86. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

87. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

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88. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

89. (Withdrawn) A method for making a pallet comprising at least one top support member adapted to support cargo and at least one bottom support member, and a plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks for separating the at least one top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, the method comprising:

forming each oval-shaped solid support block to comprise a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining a fastener area; and

fastening the at least one top and bottom support members with a plurality of nails to the plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks via the fastener areas.

90. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

91. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polyethylene has a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter.

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92. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polypropylene is formed from the group consisting of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter.

93. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

94. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

95. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.